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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/NCE AND NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2017
TAGS: PREL HU IR
SUBJECT: IRANIAN AMBASSADORS' CONFERENCE IN BUDAPEST

REF: BUDAPEST 186 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: POL/C ERIC V. GAUDIOSI; REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (U) This is an action message. Please see para 8 for action request.

¶2. (U) MFA Deputy Director for Asia (DAS Equivalent) Miklos Lengyel contacted Political Counselor to discuss a range of issues February 26 (other issues septel).

¶3. (S) Lengyel informed us that the Iranian government has asked to organize a regional conference for 12 - 15 Iranian Ambassadors to European capitals in Budapest April 12 - 14. Both the Iranian Foreign Minister and "Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe and America" are planning to attend.

¶4. (S) Lengyel explained that the GoH had no reason to refuse the request from a state with which it has diplomatic relations. He reaffirmed the GoH's strong commitment to full implementation of UNSCR 1737 in keeping with recent EU decisions, and stated that the GoH would not accede to the Iranian request for a meeting between Prime Minister Gyurcsany and the Iranian FM. He noted, however, that Foreign Minister Goncz had agreed to a courtesy call during the conference.

¶5. (S) DCM, on travel in Amman, was contacted directly by MFA State Secretary Feksz to pass the same message. Both Feksz and Lengyel made clear that the GoH was informing more than consulting, and Lengyel stated that it would be "very difficult" for the GoH to reverse its decision.

¶6. (S) Post expressed appreciation for the information and underscored our long-standing concerns re Iran, highlighted by its pursuit of nuclear weapons. We noted certain interest in the issue in Washington and advised that we would seek guidance given our view that even the perception of international engagement with Iran could undermine international pressure on the Iranian regime.

¶7. (S) Lengyel emphasized in response that the sole intention of any contacts with Iranian officials would be to underscore the GoH's support for the pertinent UNSCRs. He also invited any further message from Washington that the GoH could helpfully convey to the Iranian FM.

¶8. (SBU) We note that neither PM Gyurcsany nor FM Goncz raised this issue despite the opportunity afforded by private meetings with Ambassador Foley February 25. We believe engagement may be required both in Budapest and in Washington on this issue, and request Department's guidance re a response to the GoH.

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